

INFORMATION ~~SECRET~~ REPORT

COUNTRY France

DATE DISTR. 14 Oct 1948

SUBJECT Fort de Chatillon Atomic Energy Plant

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. 25X1X

1. I visited the atomic energy plant at Fort de Chatillon which is directed by KOWARSKI and where [redacted] This is the laboratory they are proudest of and have worked longest on. As there are very few firms manufacturing electronic equipment in France there is a dire shortage of such equipment. It just doesn't exist. You can't even buy standard items such as scaling circuits. KOWARSKI has built a semi-production factory at Chatillon in order to manufacture the equipment they need. They have only been working at this since the war, but have done a grand job and are now making needed equipment in quantity.

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2. A lot of their work at Chatillon is in developing instrumentation - vacuum gauges, generating volt meters for high voltages, and mass spectrometers. They are actually manufacturing such items there themselves. KOWARSKI showed [redacted] It involved the measurement of the paths of neutrons in graphite to ascertain the best location in which to set the active ingredients in the graphite pile. It struck me as strange that they were conducting such an experiment as the information is available in the US [redacted] What the [redacted]

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3. I noticed a large building recently constructed and now finished which KOWARSKI told me would house the graphite pile. It looked like the building which houses the pile at Harwell, England, which is called the "Gleep". (Graphite Low Energy Experimental Pile). Incidentally, KOWARSKI told me that he was the one who had thought up the word "Gleep".

4. The French have found that it was a mistake to use the Fort de Chatillon for this work. They believed it would save them money but actually it has cost them more. For example, they were forced to erect a separate building for the pile. The Fort itself is damp and evil smelling. KOWARSKI told me they were planning a more extensive plant at Saclay, 15 km southwest of Paris. I gathered from him and from others that the Saclay project is still under construction as everyone spoke of it as though it were something in the future. I doubt that any research work was being done there at that time.

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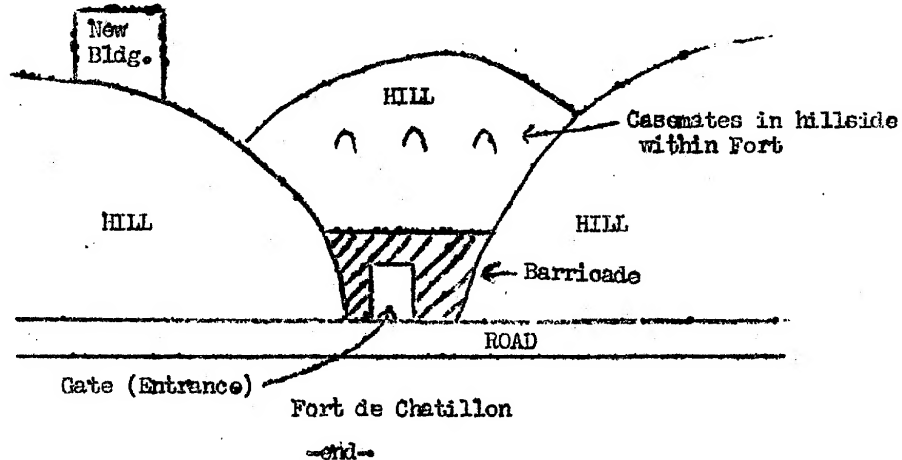
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5. I would guess that the Chatillon cyclotron was about half completed in July. As far as I know the only other one in France is in Joliot's laboratory.
6. The only uranium I saw in France was at Chatillon. They had a few very small pieces and were extremely proud of the fact that they had them at all.
7. As I was escorted around the Fort I noticed several chemistry rooms in the casemates. I don't know what was going on in the rooms. The diagram below shows these casemates (in the hill) as well as the position of the new building.

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